



Beach & Barrier Island

Park Smith Point County



Steve Levy, Suffolk County Executive

This brochure was funded by a grant from New York State Natural Heritage Trust Zoos, Sustaining Weisenberg - illustration. Brochure prepared by and Mindy Block marketing

Systems: copywriting, Robbin Block

Botanical Gardens, and Aquariums Program. production, and Maria Important Phone Numbers: Suffolk County Park Police: (631) 854-1422 Emergency: 911

SUFFOL COUNT PARK

during off season. Diving

camping units must be self-contained. Water

and restroom facilities are not available

beach permit is required. Note: Off-season

showers. Outer beach camping for self-

contained campers and trailers.

An outer

Year round campground with campsites for

Swim within designated areas.

Camping

Swimming

tents and trailers. Restrooms have hot

Suffolk County Parks Green Key Card

Daily Parking Fee in Season

due to heavy boat traffic, and display a dive flag. Blackfish and Lobsters are abundant. Permitted on the back (bay) side of the inlet due to strong current. Avoid the inlet itself Rocks slope down to twenty-five feet. Off road vehicles need outer beach permit.

Fishing

Bay fishing for Flounder, Snapper, and Blowfish. Surfcasting for Bluefish, Weakfish round. Vehicles traveling on the outer beach and Striped Bass. Fishing is permitted yearneed permit.

Horseback Riding

Group permits only. Contact the Parks Administration Office (see back page).

weekend. Provides refreshments, restrooms, Open from Memorial Day to Labor Day first-aid station and picnic tables.

Seasonal, with New York State license **Duck Hunting** Pavilion

Suffolk County Parks Administration Office: (631) 854-4949 Smith Point County Park Office: (631) 852-1313 Smith Point Campground: (631) 852-1315

Take the William Floyd Parkway (LIE, exit 68 south) to its southern terminus, crossing the Directions to the Smith Point County Park: bridge between the main land and Fire Island. Ocean Life

Welcome To Smith Point County Park

history. barrier island and its ecology and obvious attractions of sky, surf, and sand are the forces which make up a evening stars. Yet beyond the moody, sometimes delightfully bright and blue, or covered with attracts hundreds of thousands of far distant horizon, sometimes the sky stretches over the waves to a visitors annually. At Smith Point be. This Atlantic Ocean parkland is an exciting yet relaxing place to Wilderness Area and Moriches Inlet, Fire Island between the Otis Pike Smith Point County Park, located on

Barrier Islands

and rising sea levels also shape the barrier island by very gradually Atlantic Ocean. Long shore currents act as conveyor belts, carrying how the shoreline yields to these most aggressively during hurricanes and Nor'easters. Observe, over time. between Great South Bay and the elements. pushing it towards the mainland, ocean sand from east to west. Winds sandy strip of land in motion Fire Island, as a barrier island, is a

Bayberry - shrub with waxy white fruit, leaves smell sweet.

black egg cases of skates (a relative of the Sting Ray). "egg" cases (strung together like a white beaded necklace), and the in the wrackline. Look for Rockweed, Starfish, Moon Snails. Ocean life may be readily observed you may learn how to distinguish running. Press for more details and happy to tell you which fish are Jelly Fish, large Surf Clams, Whelk one fish species from another Local fishermen will usually be

Primary Dune Secondary Dune

Primary Dune

Breaker Zone

Wrack Line

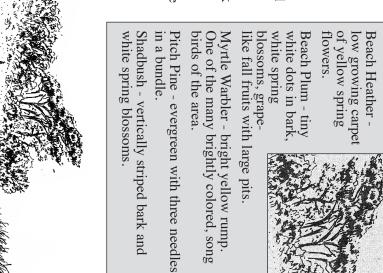
The Beach

The primary dune is held together by beach grass which extends its roots downward and outward over dune and swale, providing stability. Poison ivy, another resident of the primary dune, has three shiny and thornless leaves, and bears berries which are enjoyed by song birds but poisonous to humans. The nitrogenfixing and hardy Beach Pea flowers blue in mid-summer while Seaside Goldenrod flowers yellow in fall. Keep an eye out for Monarch butterflies in September. This is when great number of Monarchs "fuel-up" on Seaside Goldenrod nectar in preparation for migrations to Florida, California, or Mexico.

Above the surf line is a seasonally changing beach profile, especially towards summer's end when a sharp ledge forms. Beach sand is primarily composed of white quartz. Occasional black magnetite and red garnet color Smith Point's sand in patches along the upper beach. As you travel along the beach, study the pattern of the dunes. You may find this pattern broken by various types of disturbances. Foot trails, off-road vehicle paths and storm surges all can seriously impact dune structure. Avoid impacting the dunes as they provide a "front-line" barricade against the ravages of ocean winds and waves.

Behind the Primary Dune

Sheltered from salt spray or riddled with mosquitoes on windless summer days is the island's interior. It's a wild place of freshwater grasses, shady pine groves, secluded pickets of sand, and dense shrub thickets. Deer roam freely here. Notice Red Fox tracks - a cat-like print in single file; and listen for the bright musical call of the song sparrow which has a tiny black spot on its breast.



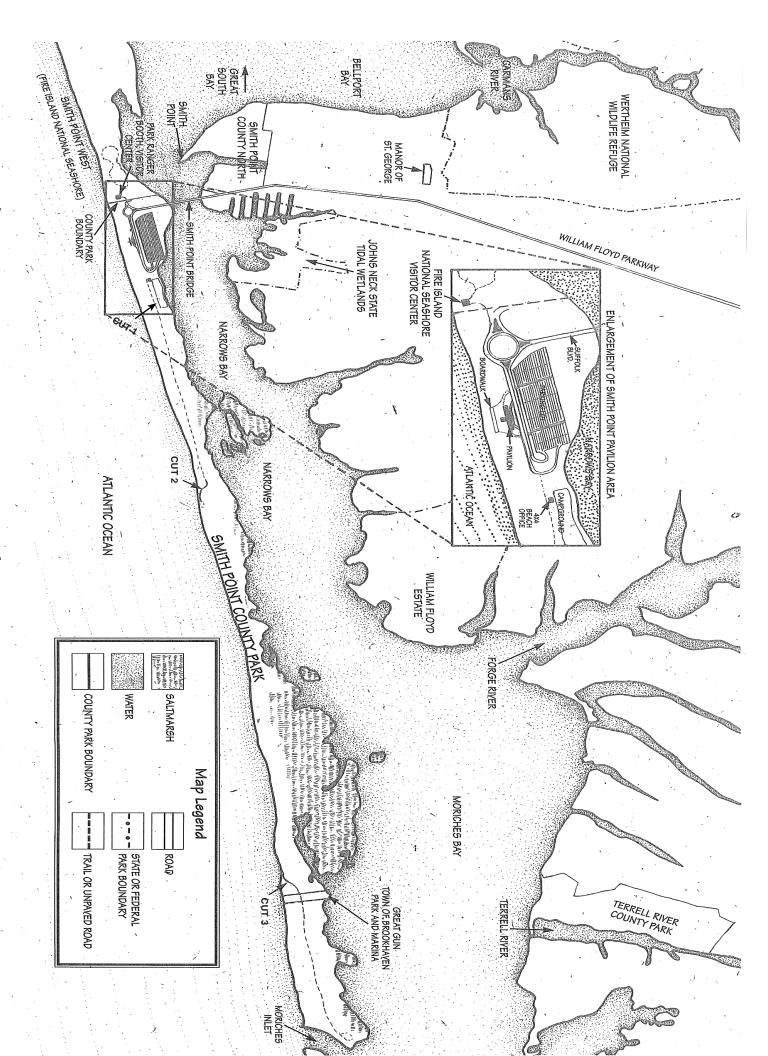
Salt Marsh

Thicket

Maritime Forest

Salt Marsh

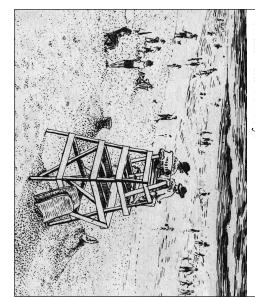
the mainland. Phragmites (also known as reed grass) has tall feathery plumes and has overtaken other species of marsh grass in some areas. Look for shimmering eel grass beds near the shoreline and several species of crab at low tide. Hermit Crabs borrow snail shells for shelter. Fiddler Crabs have one unusually large claw. The prehistoric, Atlantic Horseshoe Crabs, though not true crabs, are more closely related to spiders. Blue Claw and spider Crabs may also be found in this habitat as As dunes give way to this vast, marsh setting, beach grass gives way to native Spartina Grasses. Beyond this salt marsh, the Great South Bay extends northward to



A Heritage of Rescue

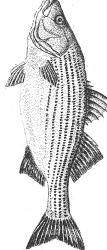
and other life saving equipment began to spring up along the barrier beach.
Today, Smith Point's nationally recognized lifeguards rescue swimmers instead of ships and State and Federal funds, rescue huts equipped with six-oared, white life boats high sea rescues were performed by volunteers prior to the development of the From 1640 to 1915, more than six hundred ship disasters occurred off Fire Island. The shifting sand bars off Fire Island made navigation treacherous. Equally treacherous the Life Saving Benevolent Association, Guard. ater, with the assistance

gently breaking forward in white. Most of all, lifeguard a riptide, relax and swim laterally towards the shoreline. Lifeguards also watch for 'the sweep' which is the long shore current and 'spilling waves' which slap and pound the shore. But they admire 'slipping waves,' sandy turbulence. outgoing current) and are skilled in understanding the sea. They can spot a riptide (a dangerous all, lifeguards Their advice: by the observance of a and warn us to always a picturesque if caught in



Smith Point Time Line:

- 1686 station at Smith Point. William Tangier Smith of England moves to from Native Americans. He sets up a whaling America and secures a license to buy land
- 1901 Charles Howell leases and operates a beach pavilion
- 1910 the bridge the following year. Smith Point. Completed in 1916. Ice wrecked Initial foot bridge built from mainland to
- 1920s-Political figure Robert Moses dreams of a major highway down the backbone of Fire Island.
- 1931 Nor 'ester forms Moriches Inlet.
- 1938 Hurricane forms Shinnecock Hilet, Ivally homes at Smith Point are lost. Westhampton defoliates trees five miles inland flooded under six feet of water. Salt spray
- 1944 County acquisitions begin at Smith Point.
- 1950s-Scientist Robert Cushman Murphy initiates a William Floyd Bridge building begins. Plans for development of Fire Island continue
- 1964 grass roots effort for preservation. Fire Island National Seashore and Smith Point County Park are established.



Striped Bass

Though a fish of shallow coastal waters, Long Island "stripers" spawn in the freshwaters of the Hudson River, and the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays. In the ocean, Stiped Bass surf through the breaking arc of a wave, feeding upon small bait fish by opening their wide mouths. Though once in decline from overfishing and other factors, this tasty fish is making a strong comeback. The NYSDEC sets a minimum size limit for "keepers." All fish under that size must be returned to the water. Please check with Park personnel for the



Piping Plovers

of eggs With sand-colored backs and a melodious "peep-lo" call, Piping Plovers are delicate, small birds of the shoreline and upper beach. They breed in spring, and lay speckled eggs in nest depressions they create in the sand on the Piping Plovers are an endangered spec What follows is a brief shorebird key: marked with orange- flagged, string fences. be trying to lure you away from its young. breezes open beach. In the Avoid their territories which are usually Plover that appears distressed, sun and warmth again over pairs take turns Plovers providing both Warmth against chilling ocean
If you are distracted by a Piping ey cream summer months, Piping summer months, Piping on their clutch sitting on their clutch h shade from a burning species. actually

- **Piping Plovers** compactly built, wid neck, bill short and nearly cylindrical. compactly built, wide
- surf with fast moving legs. Sandpipers - medium sized, long slender bill. Black-billed Sanderlings run near the
- **Terns** pointed bills, forked tails. The Common Tern, orange with black tipped bill, will hover and plunge aggressively. The endangered Least Tern (nesting area is upon bare dunes and may be fenced off) is upon bare dunes and may smaller with a yellow bill.
- Gulls Typical gulls include: Herring (flesh colored legs), Ring-billed, Laughing (with a black head), and Black-backed